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ABSTRACT

Designed to assess readers' evaluations of poems or other works of fiction, the Poetic Evaluation Rating Scale (PERS) is a set of 15 semantic differential scales. After each set of 11 poems, the reader checks a point along a line between two adjectives with opposite meanings (bi-polar adjectives). Each pair of adjectives is 1 of the 15 scales, all of which the reader checks after reading each poem. The 11 poems in PERS are from major literary periods in British or American literature. The set of semantic differential scales could be used to assess evaluation of any work of literature. No reliability or normative data are reported. [This document is one of those reviewed in The Research Instruments Project (TRIP) monograph, "Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language Arts," to be published by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. A TRIP review which precedes the document lists its category (Literature), title, authors, data, and age range (Junior High-Post Secondary) and describes the instrument's purpose and physical characteristics.] (JM)

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Category: Literature

Title: Poetic Evaluation Rating Scale

Authors: Richard D. Rees and Darhl M. Pedersen

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Age Range: Junior High Post Secondary

Description of Instrument:

Purpose: To assess readers' evaluations of poems or other works of fiction.

Date of Construction: 1965

Physical Description: PERS is a set of fifteen semantic differential evaluation scales. After each of eleven poems the reader checks a point along a line between two adjectives with opposite meanings (bi-polar adjectives). Each pair of adjectives is one of the fifteen scales. The reader checks all fifteen scales after reading each poem. An example follows:

Sonnet 18

by

William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May
And summer's lease hath all to short a date:
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest;
So long as man can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
pleasant	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	unpleasant
chaotic	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	ordered
smooth	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	rough
superficial	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	profound
meaningless	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	meaningful
obvious	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	subtle
clear	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	hazy
ugly	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	beautiful
sincere	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	insincere
bad	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	good
vague	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	precise
controlled	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	accidental
wet	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	dry
stale	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	fresh
intimate	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	remote

The eleven poems in PERS are from major literary periods in British or American literature. The set of semantic differential scales could be used to assess evaluation of any work of literature, however.

Validity, Reliability, and Narrative Data

Semantic differential measurement techniques are based on the work of Osgood and Tannenbaum (1957). Their claim is that meaning has three measurable dimensions: evaluation, potency, and activity. They use bi-polar adjective pairs as measures. The adjective pairs for the evaluative dimension have been used in many studies of attitude and value, as in the study where PERS is reported.

No reliability or normative data are reported.

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Osgood, C. E., G. Suci, and P. Tannenbaum. The Measurement of Meaning. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957.

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A FACTORIAL DETERMINATION OF POINTS OF VIEW IN POETIC EVALUATION AND THEIR RELATION TO VARIOUS DETERMINANTS

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Summary.—A factor analytic study designed to yield "points of view" or "idealized individuals" with respect to the evaluation of poetry. The poems used as stimuli were selected as representative of 11 poetic periods and were rated by 74 Ss on 15 evaluative semantic differential scales. An obverse factor analysis was completed which resulted in 19 bipolar factors. These factors were rotated orthogonally by the normal varimax method. Six of these rotated factors were determined to be significant and were then correlated with a number of outside variables to assist in their interpretation. This procedure resulted in the identification of four of these six factors. The identified factors which represented different points of view regarding the evaluation of poetry were labeled "familiarity," "masculine uncooperativeness," "extraversion," and "sophistication."

Science and art have historically been virtually distinct disciplines in both method and purpose. Science, characterized by its objective measurement and careful design, has been relatively devoid of aesthetic intervention, and the study of art with its subjective values and its affective emphasis has likewise been avoided, for the most part, by those oriented toward scientific investigation. Recently, however, psychological investigations have attempted to bring aesthetic experiences under scientific scrutiny and to measure their dimensions.

Aesthetic investigations themselves have shifted in recent years from a preoccupation with aesthetic segments (cf. Austin & Sleight, 1951; Babbitt, Woods, & Washburn, 1915; Kennedy, 1961) to an interest in more complete aesthetic situations (cf. Eysenck, 1957; Tucker, 1955). Four divisions of aesthetic stimuli may be distinguished in the interests of precision and clarity: (1) a segmental stimulus which refers to an element of a poem, painting, or song such as a stanza, an isolated form, or a chord; (2) a specific stimulus which refers to a specific and complete poem, painting, or song; (3) a general stimulus which refers to an aesthetic area in general such as the realm of poetry, of art, or of music; and (4) a total stimulus which refers to all aesthetic stimuli. Research in aesthetics may be approached from any of these divisions, and results may vary widely depending upon the type of stimulus utilized.

As factor analytic techniques have developed they have found broader application in the investigation of aesthetic experiences. Some factor analytic studies in aesthetics have yielded a general aesthetic factor which has been reported to be independent of intelligence and to possess distinguishing qualities of its own (Eysenck, 1941; Burt, 1961; Patterson, 1961; Williams, 1961; Wil-

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liams & Burt, 1961). Other studies have minimized the general aesthetic factor and have pointed to the outside correlates of the other emerging factors (Eysenck, 1940-41; Barron & Welsh, 1952).

The semantic differential (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) presents itself as a logical measure of aesthetic experience. A painting, song, or poem may be evaluated as to meaning just as well as a word, person, nonsense syllable, place, or object. Tucker (1955) has utilized the semantic differential in a factor analytic study designed to determine dimensions used by artists and non-artists in their ratings of paintings. The interest in the study was primarily directed toward the determination of types of scales rather than types of artists.

Tucker and Messick (1963) have developed a procedure designed to yield "types of perceivers," "idealized individuals," or "different points of view about stimulus similarity." In their method, to a matrix consisting of similarity ratings for pairs of stimuli for different individuals is applied a type of factor analysis. This analysis yields dimensions of variety among the individuals and also measures of similarity for pairs of stimuli for "idealized individuals" which represent the dimensions obtained in the factor analysis.

The present research was principally directed toward (1) the determination of the factors which represent "idealized individuals" or "points of view" in the evaluation of poetry, (2) an investigation of the extent to which various personality variables are related to the factors representing these particular ways of evaluating poetry, and (3) the definition of the obtained factors in terms of the related personality variables. An "idealized individual" determined from poetry ratings is an hypothetical individual who evaluates poetry from a particular point of view. This point of view is represented by a factor; and different points of view are represented by different factors. An individual who scores highly on a particular factor approaches the particular "idealized individual" which the factor represents.

METHOD

The Measuring Instruments

Two classes of measuring instruments were required, an instrument for measuring individual differences in the evaluation of poetry and instruments for measuring the various possible outside determinants. For the first class the Poetic Evaluation Rating Scale (PERS) was constructed.

Eleven poems were selected; each poem represented a major literary period in either English or American literature. The selected poems, authors, and representative periods for English literature were as follows: Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare—Elizabethan; The Good Morrow by John Donne—Seventeenth Century; Mac Flecknoe (first 20 lines) by John Dryden—Classical; To Autumn by John Keats—Romantic; Crossing the Bar by Alfred, Lord Tennyson—Victorian; and The Second Coming by William Butler Yeats—Twentieth

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Century. For American literature the poems were: To My Dear and Loving Husband by Anne Bradstreet—Puritan, Annabel Lee by Edgar Allen Poe—Romantic, The Wild Honeysuckle by Philip Freneau—Classical, Because I Could Not Stop for Death by Emily Dickinson—Transition, and Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost—Realism. Fifteen semantic differential scales which had large loadings on Tucker's (1955) evaluative factor were selected for the purpose of evaluating each poem. These scales were: pleasant-unpleasant, chaotic-ordered, smooth-rough, superficial-profound, meaningless-meaningful, obvious-subtle, clear-hazy, ugly-beautiful, sincere-insincere, bad-good, vague-precise, controlled-accidental, wet-dry, stale-fresh, intimate-remote. All 15 scales followed each poem in the PERS.

Because of the importance of sound in poetry, a tape recorded reading of each poem became an integral part of the PERS and was played while Ss were reading their copies.

The measuring instruments constituting the second class were selected so as to assess as broadly as possible the "personality sphere" (Cattell, 1957). A brief discussion of each measuring instrument contained in the second class of instruments is given below.

PERS Information Sheet.—This questionnaire followed the rating scales in the PERS and assessed several variables pertaining to the subjects and their evaluation of the poetry. The variables included were as follows: age, class (year in college), sex, artistic rating of major, declared grade point average, familiarity with the poems, familiarity with the authors. The following were coded high: senior, female, unartistic major, unfamiliarity with the poems, and unfamiliarity with the authors.

Personality Inventory.—The Personality Inventory as constructed by Pedersen (1962) consisted of modifications of some of the Guilford scales. The inventory was based on recent findings by Becker (1961) which indicated that it is necessary to score for only four of the Guilford Scales: Cycloid Disposition (emotional instability), Rhathymia (happy-go-lucky), Thinking Introversion (introspectiveness), and Cooperativeness. Since the first three scales above contained overlapping items, Pedersen (1962) randomly assigned the overlapping items to one scale or the other, effecting scales which were experimentally independent and considerably easier to interpret. Since the resulting scales were approximately 73% their original length, it is likely that their factorial integrity was retained. The Personality Inventory was also scored for the scales of Introversion and Neuroticism since it contained virtually all of the items for these two scales as measured by the Maudsley Personality Inventory (Eysenck, 1959).

The California F Scale.—All but two outdated items of the final 30 items appearing in Forms 45 and 40 of the California F Scale were included (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). The scale was scored in the usual fashion. High authoritarianism was indicated by a high positive score.

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Negative California F Scale.—Sixteen of the items in the California F Scale were reversed in meaning such that agreement indicated non-authoritarian attitudes (Pedersen, 1962). This procedure has been utilized by a number of investigators to separate acquiescence response set from authoritarianism as measured by the F scale (Chapman & Bock, 1958; Messick, 1961; Messick & Frederiksen, 1958; Pedersen, 1962; Triandis & Triandis, 1962). The acquiescence response set score, suggested by Triandis and Triandis (1962), equal to the number of positive items agreed with plus the number of negative items agreed with minus the number of matched items (in this case equal to 16), was obtained.

Tolerance-Intolerance of Ambiguity Scale.—A recently developed measure of intolerance of ambiguity was used (Budner, 1962). It is a 16-item Likert scale. Coefficient alpha estimates of reliability ranging from .39 to .62 and a test-retest reliability estimate of .85 have been reported. The scale was keyed so that a high score indicated high intolerance of ambiguity.

Category Width Scale.—The Category Width Scale which measures the width of categories that individuals characteristically employ in their categorizations of objects was given (Pettigrew, 1958). In the scale, *S*s are given an average quantity pertaining to a class of objects or events and are asked to select the largest such object from four alternatives and the smallest such object from four alternatives. An odd-even reliability estimate of .90 has been reported. It was scored such that a large score represents a broad category width.

Social Desirability Scale.—Edwards' (1957) 39-item Social Desirability Scale was administered. The scale was keyed such that a high score was indicative of high social desirability response set.

Subjects

Seventy-four psychology students at Brigham Young University completed ratings on the administered measuring instruments discussed above.

Analysis

A principal axis factor analysis over individuals (cf. Burt, 1937; Cattell, 1952; Stephenson, 1936) was used in the analysis of the PERS ratings. Since each of 11 poems was rated on each of 15 semantic differential scales, there were a total of 165 scores for each individual which were subjected to analysis. These 165 scores yielded the correlation matrix which was a 74 × 74 matrix containing correlations between *S*s. A factor matrix was obtained from the correlation matrix via the principal axes method. The obtained factor matrix was rotated orthogonally, utilizing the analytic criterion of normal varimax (Kaiser, 1958). The selection of the normal varimax rotation was made because of its superiority over the raw varimax and the quartimax methods of Holzinger and Harman (1941) and Neuhaus and Wrigley (1954), respectively. The normal varimax rotation results in factorial invariance and is claimed to

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be superior to simple structure as advocated by Thurstone (Kaiser, 1958). The resulting rotated factors represented points of view in the evaluation of poetry. Intercorrelations were obtained between the individual coefficients on each "significant" factor and the scores on the outside variables. These intercorrelations were useful in defining the obtained factors.

Results

The factor analysis extracted 49 bipolar factors which accounted for all the variation in the PERS responses. After all the factors were rotated analytically according to the normal varimax criterion (Kaiser, 1958), six factors were selected as significant and were correlated with the outside variables. The "significance" of the factors was based upon the proportion of the total amount of variance extracted by each factor. It was found that each successive factor extracted a relatively small proportion of the variance. However, there seemed to exist a relatively larger drop in proportion of variance accounted for between the sixth and the seventh factors. And beyond the seventh factor the proportion of variance accounted for was sufficiently small to warrant the inclusion of just the first six factors as "significant." At present no statistical criteria have been developed for the determination of the number of significant factors obtained from this method. Factor I, the most important factor, extracted 11.6% of the total variance. The remaining five rotated factors selected as significant accounted for 4.1%, 3.9%, 3.9%, 3.6%, and 3.5% of the total variance, respectively.

Four of the six factors selected as significant were partially defined in terms of their intercorrelations with the outside variables. Table 1 gives the intercorrelations between the selected factors and the outside variables and indicates those which are statistically significant. In terms of the patterns of intercorrelations, Factor I appears to be a familiarity factor. This factor represents the "idealized individual" who is relatively familiar with the poems and the authors of the poems included in the study. Factor IV was found to correlate significantly with sex and cooperativeness. This factor was labelled "masculine uncooperativeness" and indicates that males who are uncooperative represent a point of view in the evaluation of poetry. Factor V which correlated significantly with two of the outside variables, appears to be an extraversion factor. This factor represents the point of view in the evaluation of poetry characterized by the type of individual who is extraverted and has relatively broad category width. Factor VI was labeled "sophistication." This idealized type of individual has high scholastic ability, is relatively familiar with both the authors and the poems, is cooperative, and has a high tolerance of ambiguity. The remaining two factors, II and III, were not identifiable because of the lack of significant correlation with any of the variables included in this study.

As an additional aspect of the research, intercorrelations were obtained be-

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TABLE 1

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE SELECTED FACTORS AND THE OUTSIDE VARIABLES

Outside Variable Name	Variable No.	Factor Numbers					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Age	1	210	−085	211	153	−063	−014
Class	2	161	025	003	062	007	−218
Sex	3	048	−189	−182	−228*	187	−165
Aesthetic Rating of Major	4	−012	208	−140	−071	175	−032
Declared Grade Point Average	5	155	−011	−197	098	065	−284*
Poem Unfamiliarity	6	263*	−078	−151	−010	−009	308†
Author Unfamiliarity	7	271*	−140	−080	−084	−061	368†
Social Desirability Response Set	8	058	155	096	−149	026	−182
Category Width	9	−161	161	014	043	239*	102
Cycloid Disposition	10	026	−063	−117	155	079	128
Rhathymia	11	071	−147	080	069	−155	142
Thinking Introversion	12	−073	207	−055	148	005	−092
Cooperativeness	13	104	176	093	−232*	201	−269*
Extraversion	14	035	−008	102	−011	−271*	191
Neuroticism	15	026	−004	−117	136	100	033
Acquiescence Response Set	16	−145	098	170	164	−132	202
Intolerance of Ambiguity	17	−073	045	−073	006	−191	306†
Authoritarianism	18	−074	−092	105	157	−101	095

Note.—Decimals have been omitted.
*$p = .05$. †$p = .01$.

tween the outside variables. These intercorrelations are given in Table 2. Pedersen (1962) has reported intercorrelations between most of the outside variables employed in the present research including sex, social desirability response set, cycloid disposition, rhathymia, thinking introversion, cooperativeness, extraversion, neuroticism, acquiescence response set, intolerance of ambiguity, and authoritarianism. The results of the present research tended to replicate his findings.

DISCUSSION

The relatively small proportion of variance extracted by the "significant" rotated factors may be explained in a number of ways. One interpretation is that in the process of evaluating poetry a large number of factors contribute to the variance of an individual's responses. In considering the complexity of the stimuli this seems reasonable. A second interpretation is that the responses of the 74 Ss to poetic stimuli are so unique that little covariation between the responses of different individuals is possible. A third interpretation is that the PLRS was not sufficiently reliable to reflect adequately the evaluative responses of individuals to poetic stimuli. However, the success of the semantic differential in reliably measuring all forms of connotative meaning leads one to discount the importance of this third possibility. A fourth explanation might be

TABLE 2

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE OUTSIDE VARIABLES

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1		620	−158	−195	−125	−015	067	072	057	−114	020	−014	116	050	−118	−073	157	−013
2			−124	−145	088	084	−080	199	−118	−142	−063	095	137	−100	−108	−117	059	−140
3				−068	066	−077	−072	−121	017	278	−049	−108	−010	−069	228	−150	−085	−017
4					059	148	110	002	−010	−033	−010	016	076	−100	−051	078	231	280
5						−054	−106	046	−150	−122	−198	165	084	−188	−141	−276	−093	−179
6							752	−164	−021	289	−020	046	−262	−174	208	214	237	178
7								−091	−023	155	−018	−034	−060	−086	056	098	331	119
8									−016	−763	118	−337	596	350	−681	−199	−075	−197
9										043	018	−132	−080	060	018	−066	014	012
10											−044	362	−592	−299	922	224	098	262
11												−061	−044	798	028	113	130	075
12													−262	−248	407	081	−068	−011
13														142	−518	−257	−175	−301
14															−234	056	079	−025
15																271	064	277
16																	065	572
17																		348
18																		

Note.—Decimals have been omitted.

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that the selection of evaluative scales only, with the exclusion of scales which have large loadings on the activity and potency factors, did not permit sufficient variation to detect important individual covariation. Finally, it may be that all four of the above possibilities were operating in combination. Whatever the explanation, the selected six factors did not account for a very large proportion of the variance in the evaluative ratings of the poems. However, enough of the variance was accounted for so as to make the interpretation of the obtained factors meaningful.

Questions which seem to be generated by the results of the research include the following: (1) What is the relationship between points of view in evaluating poetry and in evaluating other aesthetic areas? (2) How does poetry of the various literary periods and poetry of different types contribute to the various points of view in evaluating poetry in general? (3) Would similar factors emerge in similar experiments with different kinds of Ss or with a wider ability range of Ss? (4) If a different group of poems were used, would similar results be obtained? (5) Would familiarizing individuals with specific poetry utilized elicit more desirable points of view in subsequent evaluation of that poetry, and what factors would emerge in such a situation? (6) Would familiarizing students with a broad range of poetry early in their formal education elicit more desirable evaluations of poetry later in life? (7) How do the points of view represented by the obtained factors influence the rating of poetry?

Implications concerning the teaching of poetry seem to be generated by at least three of the factors. When considering the positive and negative aspects of the bipolar factors, it may be that the familiarity point of view, the cooperative female point of view, and the sophistication point of view represent positive evaluative trends. If the goals in the teaching of poetry include instilling within students positive reactions to poetry, then teachers may consider the types of individuals who evaluate poetry in positive and negative ways and take steps to provide more positive poetic experiences. The familiarity factor particularly indicates the possibility of making students familiar with a broad range of poetry early in their school experience so that their later poetic experiences will elicit more positive evaluations.

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